

Should you use Methotrexate only, Dual Therapy or Triple Therapy for Rheumatoid Arthritis?

WHAT IS RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS?



Rheumatoid Arthritis affects 1 in 100 adults. It causes joint pain and swelling. Inflammation can also affect other organs including the lungs, nerves, eyes, or heart.



While there is no cure, there are very effective treatments for Rheumatoid Arthritis.



Early treatment is very important to stop joint damage.

Disease Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drugs (DMARDs)

DMARDs help stop joint pain and swelling and prevent joint damage.

Treatments are adjusted to find the ones that work best for you.

DMARDs typically take 6-12 weeks to work. Other treatments can be used to control your symptoms while they have a chance to work.



Methotrexate

Methotrexate works well on its own and is taken once a week (pill or injection).



Dual Therapy



Methotrexate may work better when taken with another drug called Hydroxychloroquine.



Triple Therapy



Methotrexate works best when given with two other drugs: Hydroxychloroquine and Sulfasalazine.



None of the above

Talk to your doctor about other options.



If you are breastfeeding, pregnant or planning a pregnancy, please discuss this with your doctor. Methotrexate cannot be used in pregnancy.

THIS DECISION AID IS FOR YOU IF:

- You are age 16 or older
- Have a new diagnosis of active rheumatoid arthritis

WHY IS THIS DISCUSSION IMPORTANT?

All of these options work well and are safe. Each choice has different chances of helping your joint pain and swelling, different side effects, and number of daily pills. It is important that your doctor knows what matters most to you to help you decide the best option.

Questions to Consider

	No Medication Not Recommended	Methotrexate Only	Dual Therapy Methotrexate +Hydroxychloroquine	Triple Therapy Methotrexate +Hydroxychloroquine +Sulfasalazine	How important is this to you? 1=Not Important, 5=Very Important Write your questions here.
BENEFITS					
Will my symptoms improve?	No Joint pain and swelling may change over time. Ongoing swelling from active rheumatoid arthritis can cause joint damage.	Yes About 40% of people feel a lot better within 3-6 months.	Yes About 40% of people feel a lot better within 3-6 months. <div>Starting on 2 or more drugs may decrease the time to advanced drugs for rheumatoid arthritis if these DMARDs don't work.</div>	Yes About 60% of people feel a lot better within 3-6 months.	
RISKS					
What are possible side effects?	Active rheumatoid arthritis has been linked with increased risks of heart disease and other chronic diseases.	<div>Methotrexate:</div> <div>Nausea or stomach upset Feeling tired or unwell Headaches Hair loss Mouth sores</div> <div>Rare side effect: Lung problem (shortness of breath, new cough)</div> <div>Review any infections with your doctor</div> <div>Avoid pregnancy</div> <div>Limit alcohol</div> <div>Monitoring: Get lab tests to check your liver and blood counts every 1-3 months</div>	<div>Hydroxychloroquine:</div> <div>Nausea or stomach upset Skin rash Headaches Sun sensitivity Ringing in ears (Tinnitus)</div> <div>Rare side effect: Damage to the back of the eye (the retina)</div> <div>Monitoring: Need for regular eye checks</div>	<div>Sulfasalazine:</div> <div>Nausea or stomach upset Headaches Rash Sun sensitivity Can decrease sperm counts</div> <div>Monitoring: Get lab tests to check your liver and blood counts every 1-3 months</div> <div>There are ways to manage side effects. Speak with your doctor. About 5-10% of people will have to stop a drug because of side effects.</div>	
LIFESTYLE					
How do I take the medications?	Not applicable	<div>Methotrexate:</div> <div>Weekly pills or an injection (injections may work better)</div>	<div>Hydroxychloroquine:</div> <div>1-2 pills daily</div>	<div>Sulfasalazine:</div> <div>2-4 pills daily</div>	
What other questions do you have?					
WHAT DO YOU THINK?		HOW DO YOU FEEL?			
Which treatment do you want to discuss?		Please answer the following:			
<div><input type="checkbox"/> Methotrexate Only</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Dual Therapy</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Triple Therapy</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> No Medication (Not Recommended)</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure</div>		<div>Do you feel SURE about the best choice for you?</div> <div>Do you know the benefits and risks of each option?</div> <div>Are you clear about which benefits and risks matter most to you?</div> <div>Do you have enough support and advice to make a choice?</div>			